

EASTERN COTTONWOOD

Populus deltoides Bartr.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Eastern poplar, Cottonwood, Carolina poplar, Whitewood.

FORM: Usually 50-75 feet in height, trunk diameter 2-3 feet, may reach a height of 100 feet with trunk 6 feet in diameter; bole tapering, continuous well into the crown; crown at first pyramidal, with age rounded, open, nearly as broad as long, lower lateral branches horizontal, most of upper branches ascending.

BARK: Ashy-gray, roughened by long deep furrows, longitudinally parallel, often connecting with one another, smooth and greenish-yellow on young trunks.

TWIGGS: Stout, yellow tinged with green or brown, round or ridged below the buds, lenticels large, longitudinally elongated.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, broadly deltoid-ovate, acute at apex, truncate or cuneate at the base, margin crenate-serrate, 3-5 inches long, thick, shining green above, pale green below, leaf stalks long, flattened.

FLOWERS: Appear before the leaves; dioecious; staminate in many flowered aments that are 3-4 inches long; pistillate flowers borne in sparsely flowered aments 2 1/2-3 1/4 inches long.

FRUIT: A drooping ament, 8-12 inches long and bears green capsules, which contain small seed with a mat of long white hairs.

WINTER BUDS: Large, ovate, acute, 1/2-3/4 inch long, smooth, lustrous, chestnut-brown, covered by 6-7 scales which are sticky resinous on inner surface; lateral buds usually divergent.

WOOD: Light, soft, weak, fine-grained, warps easily, dark brown, with thick nearly white sapwood.

USES: Pulp, crates. Historical uses: boxes, pails, tubs.

HABITAT: Prefers rich, damp soils along streams, borders of lakes, wet meadows and bottom lands.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Leaves have laterally flattened leaf-stalks; lateral branches have a tendency to ascend; bud scales resinous on their inner surface; margin of the leaves crenate-serrate.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: General; common along rivers and larger creeks, may be along small creeks and ditches, along the Tennessee River, all the way across the state.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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| 1. A fruiting branch | 4. Vertical section of a seed |
| 2. A fruit with open valves | 5. An embryo |
| 3. A seed | |



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